



**Martin P. Stratte**  
Partner, San Francisco

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For more than 120 years, Hunton has served clients across the globe with a collaborative and purposeful approach. With offices strategically located in the United States and around the world, the firm is known for its strength in the energy, financial services, real estate, retail and consumer products, and technology industries, as well as its considerable depth across numerous practice areas. Hunton fosters a strong culture built upon an unwavering commitment to its clients, colleagues, and communities.

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## Martin Stratte, Partner—Environmental

Martin Stratte is a land use and environmental attorney who represents mining and mineral exploration companies. He helps clients obtain permits for mining and mineral exploration and counsels clients on compliance with applicable federal, state, and local land use and environmental laws.

His combination of permitting experience and first-chair trial and appellate court litigation experience enhances his representation of clients through the life cycle of a project, from planning through development to completion.

Prior to joining Hunton, Marty was assistant general counsel at a leading U.S. supplier of construction aggregates and heavy building materials. He helped manage land use, zoning, and permitting activities for the company's network of quarries and mines throughout the United States. He was also a director of a publicly traded gold and base metals company with projects in the United States and Canada. His professional activities outside Hunton currently include serving as Vice Chair of the California Construction and Industrial Materials Association's Legal Action Committee.

### Describe your practice area and what it entails.

I help clients obtain permits for mining and mineral exploration activities in the United States. Clients develop an exploration program or a mine plan. I then outline the federal, state, and local permits required to commence development and develop legal positions to underpin permit applications with an eye toward legal defensibility in the event of litigation. Because mining is a highly regulated industry, permit applications for mining projects often require extensive supporting technical and environmental documentation. These applications can be analogous to a litigation brief, requiring an analysis of how the technical and environmental documentation presented in support of the application satisfies the permit criteria of the regulatory agencies.

### What types of clients do you represent?

I represent mining and mineral exploration companies across a variety of sectors, including the precious metals, base metals, critical minerals, and building materials sectors. I am currently working on gold, silver, copper, nickel, lithium, and rare earths projects.

### What types of cases/deals do you work on?

I am helping companies explore for and develop minerals that are needed to support modern-day life as we know it here in

the United States. Computers, phones, cars, planes—just about everything—require minerals that are mined.

Currently, there are a significant number of companies seeking to rapidly commence mineral exploration in the United States. It is a result of the current administration's efforts to reshore domestic mineral processing and the condition of capital markets and metals prices, among other things.

### How did you choose this practice area?

After two years of general litigation and three years of general land use and environmental law, I wanted to find a niche. I had worked on some mining projects and observed that there were not a lot of attorneys working in this space. I joined a firm with a mining practice and absolutely loved the substance.

### What is a "typical" day like and/or what are some common tasks you perform?

My typical day consists of meetings with clients to discuss their objectives for mining and mineral exploration and developing frameworks of evidence they will need to present to regulatory agencies to obtain permits. Internally, I am managing associates who are researching legal issues related to proposed activities and the applicable permitting programs. Externally, I am managing work product and studies prepared by technical and environmental consultants and conferring

with regulators regarding pending and forthcoming applications. In addition, I am defending litigation filed by third parties seeking to challenge permits that have been issued.

### **What training, classes, experience, or skills development would you recommend to someone who wishes to enter your practice area?**

I would read about public land laws and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related case law. The Foundation for Natural Resources and Environmental Law has excellent online presentations available for download.

### **What do you like best about your practice area?**

What I like best about my practice area—mining and mineral exploration permitting—is the unique combination of technical complexity, regulatory challenge, and real-world impact.

This area of law is at the forefront of the energy transition and energy independence in the United States. By helping clients secure permits for projects involving critical minerals such as lithium, nickel, and rare earths, we are facilitating the supply chains needed for renewable energy technologies, electric vehicles, and advanced battery storage. These minerals are indispensable for traditional and developing energy infrastructure.

It's rewarding to help clients navigate a highly regulated landscape, where permit applications are often challenged by third parties and require rigorous analysis and strategic thinking to ensure legal defensibility. I enjoy collaborating with a diverse set of professionals—clients, technical consultants, and regulators. The dynamism of the industry, especially with the current push for domestic mineral production, makes this practice area both intellectually stimulating and deeply meaningful to me.

Ultimately, I appreciate how my work not only supports traditional industries but also plays a pivotal role in developing new technologies and advancing national priorities for sustainability and energy security.

### **What misconceptions exist about your practice area?**

One of the most common misconceptions about mining and mineral exploration law is that it is narrowly focused on extraction and primarily benefits large corporations at the expense of the environment. In reality, the practice is far more nuanced and balanced. Modern mining projects in the United States are subject to some of the world's most rigorous environmental standards and extensive regulatory oversight. Obtaining permits requires careful analysis of com-

plex technical and environmental documentation and robust public engagement with a strong emphasis on environmental stewardship.

Another misconception is that mining law is outdated or unchanging. In fact, the field is rapidly evolving in response to new technologies, shifting market demands, and emerging priorities such as the energy transition and the need for domestic sources of critical minerals. Legal practitioners in this area must stay current on developments in environmental law, public land policy, and regulatory frameworks.

Finally, some people assume that mining permitting is a purely adversarial process. While there can be litigation and public opposition, much of my work involves collaboration—not only with clients but also with regulators, technical experts, and community stakeholders—to design projects that balance economic, technological, and environmental interests. This practice area is dynamic and plays a vital role in supporting both economic development and the advancement of clean energy and new technologies in the United States.

### **What is unique about your practice area at your firm?**

What is unique about my practice area at my firm is that it seamlessly integrates aspects of many different practices, including M&A, litigation, environmental law, and land use. Mining and mineral exploration permitting is inherently multidisciplinary, requiring collaboration not only with technical and environmental consultants but also with colleagues who specialize in transactions, dispute resolution, and regulatory compliance.

For instance, our mining clients often pursue mergers, acquisitions, or joint ventures to expand their portfolios or access new resources, so we work closely with our M&A team to navigate the legal complexities of these transactions. Litigation is a key component as well; defending permits against challenges from third parties or advocating for clients in regulatory disputes calls for strategic input from our litigation group. Environmental and land use experience is essential for preparing robust applications and managing compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.

This integrated approach allows us to deliver comprehensive, tailored solutions for clients involved in projects vital to the energy transition and the development of new technologies. By drawing on the strengths and knowledge of multiple practice areas within the firm, we are able to address the full spectrum of legal and strategic challenges that arise in mining and mineral exploration, making our practice truly distinct in the legal market.

**How do you see this practice area evolving in the future?**

I see the mining and mineral exploration permitting practice area becoming increasingly important as the demand for critical minerals grows to support the energy transition, renewable technologies, and U.S. energy independence. Regulatory requirements will likely become more complex, with heightened attention to environmental impacts, community engagement, and sustainability. The integration of new technologies in both mining operations and regulatory processes

will also shape the landscape, requiring lawyers to stay current on technical developments and compliance strategies.

Looking ahead, collaboration across M&A, litigation, and environmental law will be even more essential as projects become larger and more scrutinized. Overall, this practice area will continue to evolve rapidly, playing a key role in enabling sustainable development and technological innovation.

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